

SECTION

2

DECODING AND SEGMENTING WORDS



STRAND: READING

Sub-Strand: Phonics

INTRODUCTION

Hello! You are warmly welcome to this section of the Intervention English Language lesson. This section deals with reading. Reading is very essential to every learner of the English Language. This lesson will cover decoding simple phonetically regular words in the English Language. Your knowledge on phonics will help you in this lesson. After going through this lesson, it is expected that, you will be able to use the method of decoding to read and write new words. However, as you learn to decode words or parts of words, you must also show your ability to blend the sounds together to read written words. In decoding, we are going to connect how words sound to how those sounds are represented by letters. Decoding is relevant because it forms the foundation for all other reading instructions. As a learner, if you cannot decode words, your reading fluency will be affected, your vocabulary will be limited and your reading or text comprehension will also suffer. Therefore, decoding should be the first step to reading. You are encouraged to take all the activities in the lesson seriously to enable you develop your speech and writing competencies. You will be provided with relevant review questions to assess your learning progress.

By the end of the lesson, you as the student will be able to;

1. Decode simple phonetically regular words
2. Segment and write simple, decodable words.

Key Ideas:

- To decode is to match letters to their corresponding sounds.
- Regular words are words that can be decoded through the knowledge of phonics patterns.
- Grapheme is the letter representation of sounds.
- Segmenting is breaking words into individual sounds.
- Decoding is matching a letter or combination of letters (graphemes) to their sounds (phonemes).

Activity 2.1:

Read the following words and write down the number of different sounds that make up each of them.

Example: shift = 4 sounds (/sh/ /ɪ/ /f/ /t/)

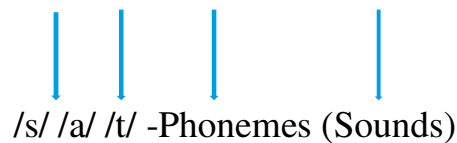
Mood	build	read
Sack	count	try
Balm	rain	seek

Decoding (Regular Words)

As mentioned in our introduction, decoding is an important element of reading. Let us now try to define what decoding is.

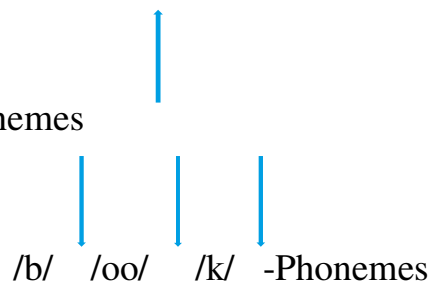
Decoding is applying knowledge of letter-sound relationship to pronounce written words correctly. In simple terms, it is the ability to recognise a letter and say the sounds it represents. Now, let us decode the words 'sat' and 'book'.

s a t -Graphemes (Letters)



Digraph

b [o o] k - Graphemes

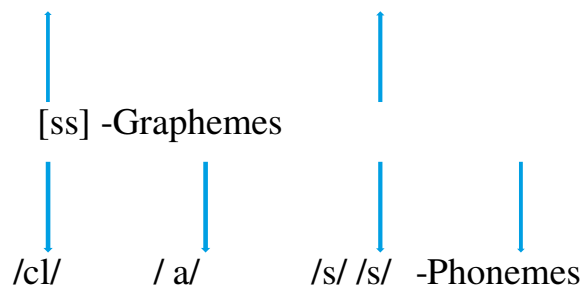


2-Letter Blend

Digraph

[cl]

a [ss] -Graphemes



We have just indicated that the letters (graphemes) **s**, **a** and **t** relate to the sounds (phonemes) /s/, /a/, /t/ the letters **b**, **o**, **o**, and **k** represent the sounds /b/, /oo/, /k/. Additionally, the letters **c**, **l**, **a**, **s** and **s** represent the sounds /cl/, /a/, /ss/. Together, they form the words ‘sat’, ‘book’ and ‘class’ respectively; this is what decoding is about. We decode words so that reading can be easier. When people speak, you hear or perceive sounds, not letters. We write using letters (graphemes) but we speak using sounds (phonemes). Now get ready to decode the following words on your own.

Activity 2.2:

Decode the following words:

1. spank _____
2. ship _____
3. trim _____
4. snake _____

Good! I hope you enjoyed the activity. Let us proceed to learn some decoding processes in English Language. The focus of this lesson is decoding regular words. What are regular words? Regular words are words that can easily be decoded through the knowledge of phonics. Examples include *well*, *get* and *before*. On the other hand, irregular words are words that do not conform to the patterns of phonics. Examples are *said*, *do*, *yacht* and *doubt*.

Let us continue to look at how the patterns of phonics can help decode words.

English Language is a language of letters or alphabets consisting of 44 speech sounds (phonemes) which are linked to letters (graphemes). These graphemes are the representation of the various sounds. The graphemes can be a single letter (graph), or a combination of two (digraph), three (trigraph) or four letters (quad-graph). Let us study the table below.

Phonic Patterns in English language

S/N	Sound-Letter Pattern	Grapheme	Sound of Grapheme	Example of words
1	1 letter making 1 sound	Graph	/b/, /a/, /k/, /t/	bat, pat cup
2	2 letters making 1 sound	Digraph	/ch/, /sh/, /oy/	chair, shoe, boy
3	3 letters making 1 sound	Trigraph	/dge/, /ere/, /igh/, /our/	bridge, here, high, neighbour

I hope you can relate well with the patterns of phonics. If you have any challenge with the patterns, you may consult your teacher or the link at the extended reading section provided at the end of the lesson.

Activity 2.3:

Provide five words under each of the graphemes in the table below.

S/N	Grapheme	Example of Words
1	Graph	
2	Digraph	
3	Trigraph	

Good work done! You are now going to learn how to use phonics patterns to decode words. Let us consider the word *campaign*. The following steps can help you decode words with ease.

campaign

1. Look at the whole word- *campaign*
2. Look for parts or chunks you might know- *cam-paign*
3. Put your finger under the beginning letter of the word- *campaign*
4. Move your finger from left to right- *campaign*
5. Slowly stretch out the sound and chunks in the word- /k/ /a/ /m/ /p/ /eɪ/ /n/
6. Blend the sounds to read the whole word- /k/+ /a/+ /m/+ /p/+ /eɪ/+ /n/ = /kampeɪn/

How do you feel after going through the steps of decoding words? Well, you can go through the steps again to help you understand the process of decoding words. Perform the activity below to ensure you have grasp the patterns above.

Activity 2.4:

Decode the following words using the steps above:

1. neighbour
2. between
3. assembly
4. speech
5. number

Good job! Look for other words from your notebook and practice decoding them.

Another way of decoding words is to break it up into syllables. When you are listening to a word, you can hear the syllables. The syllables are the tiny pauses in a word. For example, in the word *kitchen*, there is a tiny pause between *kit* and *chen*. You know there are two syllables in the word.

Activity 2.5:

Watch the video below to help you acquire this skill easily. Take a cue from the presenter and practice after her.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3utI5MMph3s>

**Activity 2.6:**

To double check your understanding, clap the syllables in the following words as you say them. (Clap each syllable as you say it.). Then, indicate the number of syllables in them.

dance =	addition =	station =
caterer =	football =	sentence =
finalist =	exercise =	praise =

In decoding, we may come across '**nonsense words**' in the chunking process. A 'nonsense word' is a pretend word without meaning. It only helps you to identify real words and read them with the sounds contained. For example, the words *dawn*, *casket*, *migrate*, *register*, *after* and *seven* may have the following 'nonsense words':

da-wn: da

cas-ket: cas

mig-rate: mig

re-**gister**: gister

af-ter: af

sev-en: sev

Even though the words da, cas, mig, gister, af and sev are ‘nonsense words’, your ability to recognise them in words will help you decode individual phonemes and then put them together (blend) to read. It is a skill for phonetic decoding or sound recognition.

Activity 2.7:

Think of five words with “nonsense words” and list them.

That was easy, wasn't it?

EXTENDED READING

1. Click on any of the links below to read further on decoding.
 - a. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au>>...
 - b. <https://word.tips>>word-scramble
 - c. <https://high5test.com>>decoding-s...
2. MacCary, M. (2021). *Handbook for Reading*. Ebeka Book Production
3. Intervention English Teacher Manual





SEGMENTING WORDS

This lesson looks at how words are made up of different sounds and how we can use this knowledge to read and write new words. When we read, we need to be able to break words into their sounds or segments and then put those sounds together (blend) to be able to read the whole word. In the same way, when we write, we need to be able to pronounce the sounds and write down the letters they represent. This process is called segmenting, and it is an important way of becoming a better reader and writer.

Segmenting and Writing Simple Decodable Words

Let us begin our lesson by revising on what segmenting is. Do you remember segmenting in decoding words? Consider the word '*sand*'. Through segmenting, the word '*sand*' becomes /s/ /a/ /n/ /d/. That is, the word '*sand*' has four (4) sounds.

Segmenting is the ability to identify sounds in words or breaking the word down into individual sounds. Why do I segment words? When I segment words, I can spell them and segmenting helps me to be a reader. Reading and writing are the foundation of literacy skills. Consider the following examples.

1. hope- /h/ /o/ /p/  3-sound segments
2. blue- /b/ /l/ /oo/  3-sound segments
3. clock- /k/ /l/ /o/ /k/  4-sound segments
4. cat- /k/ /a/ /t/  3-sound segments

Activity 2.8:

Segment the following words into individual sounds.

1. shelf: _____
2. string: _____
3. sip: _____
4. flick: _____
5. leap: _____

Good job! Here are some simple steps to follow in breaking words into individual sounds.

1. Look at the whole word.
2. Look for parts or chunks you might know.
3. Lift your finger to represent a sound in the word.
4. Count the individual sounds in the word from left to right.
5. Slowly stretch out the sound and chunks in the word.
6. Start from simple, decodable words to complex words.

Study these examples:

1. at- /a/ /t/ (2 sounds)
2. wear- /w/ /ear/ (2 sounds)
3. boy- /b/ /oy/ (2 sounds)
4. hen- /h/ /e/ /n/ (3 sounds)
5. diet- /d/ /ie/ /t/ (3 sounds)
6. play- /p/ /l/ /ay/ (3 sounds)
7. clap- /c/ /l/ /a/ /p/ (4 sounds)
8. dress- /d/ /r/ /e/ /ss/ (4 sounds)
9. think- /th/ /i/ /n/ /k/ (4 sounds)
10. strong- /s/ /t/ /r/ /o/ /ng/ (5 sounds)
11. rabbit - /r/ /a/ /bb/ /i/ /t/ (5 sounds)
12. splash- /s/ /p/ /l/ /a/ /sh/ (5 sounds)
13. sprint- /s/ /p/ /r/ /i/ /n/ /t/ (6 sounds)
14. workshop- /w/ /or/ /k/ /sh/ /o/ /p/ (6 sounds)
15. tramps - /t/ /r/ /a/ /m/ /p/ /s/ (6 sounds)

Note: The sounds marked red are **digraphs** while the one marked green is a **trigraph**.

Activity 2.9:

Segment the following words into their individual sounds

1. skirt: _____
2. thumb: _____
3. health: _____

4. thump: _____
5. daughter _____
6. wreck: _____

Thumbs up! You are encouraged to use dot bottoms in segmenting words into sounds as indicated below. This is to help you identify the number of sounds in a word.

at nek

.. .. .

stand shelf

....

cat: /k/ /a/ /t/

· · ·

park: /p/ /a/ /k/

· · ·

Activity 2.10:

Segment the letters in the following words into their individual sounds.

1. brew: _____
2. bow: _____
3. lawn: _____
4. crowd: _____
5. crew: _____

Congratulation! Gradually, you are making progress. You have learnt that, your ability to learn to read and write depends on how you are able to connect or match sounds (phonemes) with their letters or visual representation (the alphabetic codes or graphemes). Therefore, before you learn to write, you have to break up the words by listening to the sounds in them.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Decode the following words.
 - a. shampoo
 - b. fantastic
 - c. jacket
 - d. attend
 - e. present

2. Match the parts of the words column A to column B to form the appropriate words in column C.

S/N	Column A	Column B	Column C
a.	pre	form	
b.	dis	pare	
c.	mis	seen	
d.	un	fortune	
e.	in	pleasure	

3. Scramble the following words to form other words.
 - a. Race: _____
 - b. Angel: _____
 - c. Spare: _____
 - d. Learn: _____
 - e. Stressed: _____
 - f. Dormitory: _____
 - g. Rant: _____
 - h. Plea: _____
 - i. Evil: _____
 - j. Cinema: _____

4. Read the extract below and break the underlined words into their individual sounds.

Learning to read and write is very important in the life of every student. We read to gather pieces of information on specific topics, for entertainment, as well as relaxation. Through reading, one is able to travel around the whole world! You become a global citizen as you read. Remember reading is also a good exercise for the brain. So, read to keep your brain active all the time.

5. Segment the following words into their various sounds
- flashcard
 - reflect
 - child
 - ought
6. Analyse the following words and use dots to indicate the number of sounds in them.
- foot
 - foam
 - swing
7. Join the appropriate prefixes or suffixes in the column A with the appropriate base words in column B to create another word in column C in the table provided below.

Column A		Column B	Column C
<i>S/N</i>	<i>Prefix</i>	<i>Base word</i>	<i>Word Formed</i>
a.	in-	appear	
b.	im-	fold	
c.	ir-	polite	
d.	re-	discipline	
e.	un-	responsible	
	<i>suffixes</i>		
f.	-ful	Logic	
g.	-ment	Teach	
h.	-able	Govern	

	Column A	Column B	Column C
i.	-al	Prevent	
j.	-er	use	

EXTENDED READING

1. Click on any of the following links to read more on segmenting:

<https://phonicshero.com>>Blog

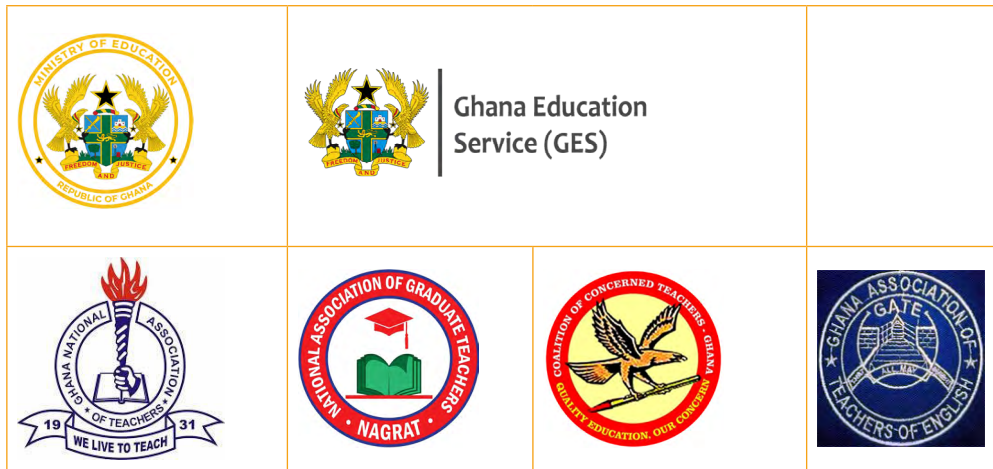
<https://mrslearningbee.com>>teaching

2. MacCary, M. (2021). *Handbook for Reading*. Ebeka Book Production
3. Intervention English Teacher Manual

GLOSSARY

1. **Chunking:** Breaking words into parts that are familiar to help pronounce words. That is, the part of the word that one can easily sound or read. For example, in the word *little*, you can easily identify the word **'it'** (pronoun). Hence, **'it'** can be a chunk in the word *little*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



List of Contributors

Name	Institution
Benjamin Ornon Akrono	Islamic Girls SHS, Suhum
Fati Issifu	Buipe Girls' Model School
Lawrenda Osei-Anim	Accra Girls SHS